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Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fourth session

Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Letter dated 12 July 1999 from the representatives of Canada, Egypt, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan and Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Pursuant to rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we have the honour to request the inclusion of an item entitled "Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child" in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure, we hereby enclose an explanatory memorandum.

(*Signed*) Michel **Duval**
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(*Signed*) Ahmed **Aboul Gheit**
Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations

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Annex

Explanatory memorandum

Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

The international community commemorates this year the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This anniversary provides a special opportunity to assess progress in the ratification and implementation of the Convention and is an occasion for Governments, the United Nations system and civil society to reaffirm their commitment to achieving the universal realization of the rights of the child.

Background

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/25 on 20 November 1989, 10 years after the International Year of the Child, and the same day as the anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of the Child.

The Convention emerged from a long drafting process that was marked by the active collaboration of Governments, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. Countries in various regions of the world were represented and enriched the process with perspectives from their national traditions and cultural values, as well as solutions from different legal systems. United Nations agencies shared their technical expertise and operational experience and promoted the adoption of viable solutions capable of furthering respect for the rights of the child and preventing the abuse and exploitation of children. The active involvement of non-governmental organizations led to the inclusion of innovative aspects, including the emphasis on the role of advocacy and awareness-raising in the promotion of the rights of the child.

The Convention favours an integrated approach to those rights, avoiding the categorization of rights that, in previous decades, had separated civil and political rights on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights on the other.

The Convention has built strong consensus and wide alliance around the promotion and protection of the rights of the child. This helps to explain the short period of time needed (nine months) before the Convention entered into force (2 September 1990 according to resolution 45/104 of 10 December 1990), as well as the fact that it is today the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the history of the United Nations (191 States have ratified or acceded to the Convention, only two Member States have not yet done so).

Proposal

The sponsors are convinced that a solemn plenary meeting would be an appropriate setting for this important occasion. While the actual date of the anniversary is 20 November the sponsors respectfully suggest that such a meeting be scheduled the preceding week, preferably on 15 November. According to past practice, the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, the Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the Chairpersons of the five regional groups could be invited to address the General Assembly.

No resolution, decision or formal statement would be adopted as an outcome of the commemorative meeting, but a press communiqué on the proceedings could be widely circulated by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat.